



Seattle Light Rail Review Panel

Comments on...

McClellan Street Station

Scope Briefing

The Panel was briefed on May 26, 1999, however no formal recommendations were made. Discussion focused on the following topics:

- Design cues for the station.
- Incentives and market for transit-oriented development.
- Coordination with Metro on bus layover needs.

Summary of Issues Raised in LRRP Scope Briefing Progress Report (July 1999):

- McClellan as a gateway to the Rainier Valley to the south, and as the portal to the tunnel stations northward.
- Potential redesign of the street/intersection to better accommodate heavy bus, truck, and auto circulation while still creating a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment for light rail users.
- Preserving and enhancing the historic integrity of Cheasty Boulevard.
- Creating opportunities for smooth bus transfers without degrading the business environment (or potential for future pedestrian-oriented retail/commercial uses).
- Safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Further discussion needed on the shape and form of the aerial structure as it leaves Beacon Hill and touches down on MLK, Jr. Way.
- Recommendation to work further with the North Rainier planning group to support their vision of a neighborhood center at McClellan that is compatible with Link.

Concept Design

The Panel was briefed on September 22, 1999, however no formal recommendations were made. Discussion focused on the following topics:

- The possibility of exploring an at-grade alignment for the McClellan station— the feasibility from an engineering standpoint, and the pros and cons from an urban design standpoint.
- How the station might incorporate mixed use development into the structure (whether aerial as proposed, or at-grade if feasible), and the relationship between the station and existing development which currently faces onto Rainier Avenue.
- The design treatment of the tunnel portal in Beacon Hill and the transition from an aerial structure to an at-grade alignment south of McClellan.
- Recommendation that the design of the light rail tracks and aerial structure yield to the urban design needs of the town center at McClellan.

Summary of Issues Raised in LRRP Concept Design Progress Report (December 1999):

- Explore the feasibility and desirability of an at-grade alignment; if at-grade is neither feasible nor desirable, then ensure that the design yields to the needs of the town center in creating quality urban spaces.
- Work now to interest developers in a joint development project at McClellan, potentially incorporating the station in a mixed-use building.
- Because of the dominance of bus circulation at this site, bus-rail connections and bus layover issues must be resolved as soon as possible. Design work cannot otherwise move forward without strong coordination between Sound Transit and Metro. Similarly, coordination between the City and Sound Transit on larger urban design issues— such as the alignment of MLK and the MLK/Rainier intersection— is also imperative at this early stage of design for light rail.

Schematic Design

The Panel was briefed on January 26, 2000; and made the following recommendations:

The Panel did not recommend approval of the schematic design as presented, believing that the urban design impact of the proposed aerial alignment is of such significance that other design alternatives, specifically an at-grade alignment and station, should be analyzed. The Panel further comments that the following design issues are not adequately addressed in the McClellan schematic design:

- How impacts of the aerial guideway on the streetscape would be mitigated;
- Design of the transition structure and its touchdown on MLK;
- Design of the tunnel portal and the aerial structure between the portal and station;
- Treatment of the plaza that is potentially to be bounded by transit-oriented development; and
- Coordination between the design of the light rail station and the bus transfer facility.

Whether the alignment is aerial or at-grade, the Panel also requests additional design work on the following elements associated with the McClellan station:

- Transit-oriented development guidelines for private development on sites controlled by Sound Transit as a means to ensure development that is supportive of light rail as well as quality urban design of the plaza and other public spaces for this future town center;
- Further discussion of the potential retail/mixed-use development and its relationship to the station;
- Urban design relationship of the station and alignment to Cheasty Boulevard, and
- An urban design analysis for the entire light rail/bus/TOD area as a whole prepared collaboratively by Sound Transit, the City, and Metro.

The Panel was briefed on February 9, 2000, and made the following recommendations:

The Panel thanked Sound Transit for a responsive presentation on the elements required to make an at-grade alignment for McClellan Station work and, after further discussion of the merits and drawbacks of an at-grade alignment, requested by a vote of 5 to 2, that Sound Transit prepare a rudimentary costs/impacts analysis for a below-grade option side by side with a similar analysis for the proposed aerial alignment. In addition, Sound Transit was requested to estimate general costs of an aerial alignment that incorporates the station platform into a mixed use development. In the meantime, the Panel requested that any continued work on the proposed aerial alignment include further development of the following features:

- Incorporation of the platform and areas of the guideway into a mixed-use building while addressing other station elements as part of that transit-oriented development;
- Redesign of the roof structure in light of the platform/mixed-use building referenced above; and
- Further detailing of the guideway and transition structures at either end with consideration of the visual weight of the structures and uses (intended or not) under them.

Lastly, the Panel requested that the City and/or Sound Transit take immediate steps to conduct additional urban design analysis for the entire McClellan area to address Link as one part of a complex intersection with multiple issues and uses including future town center development, connections to historic Cheasty Boulevard, the adjacent proposed bus transfer and layover facility, and heavy traffic and circulation needs.

The Panel was briefed on March 1, 2000 on rudimentary costs and feasibility of a below-grade alignment for the McClellan station. After discussion, the Panel acknowledged the constraints of a below-grade alignment and reiterated its recommendations from the January 26th and February 9th meetings which address further design work on various aspects of an aerial alignment.

Design Development

No briefing scheduled yet.

Construction Documents

No briefing scheduled yet.